

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/IAI:GDKULICK/HLK
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S E C R E T STATE 038354

NODIS
WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, IS, EG, US

SUBJECT: BRIEFING OF FRENCH AMBASSADOR ON SADAT VISIT

REF: (A) STATE 031737 (B) STATE 31717

1. SUMMARY: DISCUSSION BETWEEN ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON AND FRENCH AMBASSADOR DE LABOULAYE COVERED SADAT
VISIT AND CURRENT STATE OF ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS.
ATHERTON SAID WE WOULD CONTINUE TO FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON
GETTING AGREED DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES LOOKING TOWARD
BROADENING OF NEGOTIATIONS TO INCLUDE OTHER ARABS.
SADAT'S OBJECTIVE IS STILL COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. WE
HAVE NOT YET MADE UP OUR MINDS CONCERNING EGYPTIAN ARMS
REQUESTS. AMBASSADOR SAID FRANCE IS URGING SADAT NOT
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TO PURSUE BILATERAL DEAL WITH ISRAEL UNTIL ISRAEL IS
MORE FORTHCOMING ON PALESTINIANS. AMBASSADOR URGED
U.S. TO KEEP OPEN MIND REGARDING FUTURE DEALINGS WITH PLO.
END SUMMARY.

2. FRENCH AMBASSADOR DE LABOULAYE CALLED ON ATHERTON ON
FEBRUARY 8 FOR A BRIEFING ON THE SADAT VISIT AND THE
CURRENT STATE OF PLAY IN THE PEACE PROCESS. AFTER ATHERTON
BRIEFED THE AMBASSADOR ALONG THE LINES OF REFTELS, AMB
SAID THAT FRANCE FELT THAT IF THERE WAS NO MOVEMENT TOWARD

RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, THE PLO, WHICH HAD BEEN QUIESCENT RECENTLY, WOULD BEGIN TO STIR UP TROUBLE AGAIN. FRANCE, THEREFORE, FELT A SENSE OF URGENCY REGARDING THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS. ATHERTON SAID THAT PRESIDENT SADAT SHARED THAT CONCERN, AS DO WE. OUR HOPE IS TO ARRIVE SOON AT AGREED LANGUAGE ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS PART OF A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES THAT WOULD PERMIT KING HUSSEIN AND MODERATE PALESTINIANS TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. WHEN HE RETURNS TO THE MIDDLE EAST, ATHERTON SAID THAT HE WOULD BE FOCUSING ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, BUT WOULD BEGIN TO EXPLORE WITH EGYPT, ISRAEL AND JORDAN POSSIBLE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT EGYPT USE THE BEGIN PLAN AS A STARTING POINT FOR SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT OR, ALTERNATIVELY, THAT IT COME UP WITH AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN OF ITS OWN. EGYPTIANS ARE RELUCTANT TO GET TOO DEEPLY INTO THE SUBJECT UNTIL THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES HAS BEEN WORKED OUT. MR. ATHERTON SAID HE WOULD NOT RECOMMEND THAT FRANCE UNDERTAKE ANY NEW INITIATIVES IN THIS RESPECT SINCE THE EGYPTIANS, PARTICULARLY THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WERE QUITE NERVOUS

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ON THIS SUBJECT.

4. WITH RESPECT TO PRESIDENT SADAT'S ARMS REQUEST, WHICH HE SAID WERE INTENDED FOR USE ON THE AFRICAN FRONT RATHER THAN AGAINST ISRAEL, PRESIDENT CARTER HAS MADE NO DECISION.

5. AMBASSADOR DE LABOULAYE ASKED IF WE INTENDED TO SPEAK TO DAYAN ABOUT ISRAEL'S INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA. ATHERTON SAID WE HAVE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TOLD ISRAEL THAT WE DON'T APPROVE OF SUPPLY OF ARMS TO EITHER SIDE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, BUT ISRAEL FEELS THAT ETHIOPIA IS AN IMPORTANT COUNTERWEIGHT TO ARAB DOMINATION OF THE RED SEA. THE ISRAELIS HAVE ASSURED US THAT THEY ARE NOT SUPPLYING ANY U.S.-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT TO ETHIOPIA.

6. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED HOW THE CURRENT NEGOTIATING ACTIVITY RELATED TO THE ULTIME OBJECTIVE OF A GENEVA CONFERENCE. ATHERTON SAID PRESIDENT SADAT'S OBJECTIVE REMAINS A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND THAT HE SEES GENEVA AT THE END OF THE PROCESS, BUT BELIEVES MOST DETAILS NEED TO BE WORKED OUT AHEAD OF TIME.

7. AMBASSADOR DE LABOULAYE NOTED THAT SADAT'S STATURE WAS RISING IN U.S. PUBLIC OPINION, LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE ISSUE OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS. HE ASKED IF WE SAW

ANY ISRAELI FLEXIBILITY ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE.
ATHERTON SAID WE SEE VERY LITTLE GIVE SO FAR. THE
AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL ADVISE
SADAT NOT TO PROCEED TOWARD A BILATERAL AGREEMENT
WITH ISRAEL UNLESS HE SUCCEEDS IN "GETTING MORE" FOR
THE PALESTINIANS. ATHERTON SAID THAT SADAT DID NOT
NEED CONVINCING ON THIS SCORE, SINCE HE IS GETTING
THE SAME ADVICE FROM ALL OF HIS ADVISORS. DAYAN
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RECOGNIZES SADAT'S PROBLEM AND HAS BEEN HELPFUL AND
IMAGINATIVE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT ISRAEL'S PROPOSALS
ARE STILL FAR FROM ACCEPTABLE TO THE ARABS.

8. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHAT WAS CONTAINED IN ARAFAT'S
MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER CONVEYED BY CONGRESSMAN
FINDLEY. ATHERTON SAID IT CONTAINED NOTHING NEW, BUT
HE NOTED ARAFAT SPEAKS IN SEVERAL VOICES. THIS
MESSAGE WAS FROM THE "MODERATE" ARAFAT. WE ARE NOT
ACKNOWLEDGING THE MESSAGE AND HAVE NOT CHANGED OUR
POLICY CONCERNING DEALINGS WITH THE PLO. OUR OFFER
OF DIALOGUE WAS STILL OPEN IF THE PLO IS PREPARED TO
RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND ACCEPT RESOLUTION
242.

9. THE AMBASSADOR FELT THAT THE WEST SHOULD COMMUNICATE
WITH MODERATE PLO FIGURES LIKE ARAFAT AND KHALID AL-
FAHUM, LEST THEY BE SWEEPED AWAY BY THE RADICALS, LEAVING
US NO ONE TO TALK TO IN THE FUTURE.

10. ATHERTON NOTED THAT ISRAEL'S PROPOSALS FOR PALES-
TINIAN LANGUAGE IN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES REFER
ONLY TO RESIDENTS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, THEREBY
EXCLUDING THOSE LIVING OUTSIDE THE TERRITORIES. THE
EGYPTIANS FELT THAT ISRAEL SHOULD BROADEN ITS FORMULA
SO THAT THEY WILL BE OPEN TO DEALING WITH OUTSIDE
PALESTINIANS AS WELL, SHOULD THERE BE A SPLIT IN THE
PLO AND SOME MODERATES COME OUT IN FAVOR OF RECOGNITION
OF ISRAEL. VANCE

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